

The Amateur in You, Part 1

What have you been pondering?



Handheld radio accessories

Whether you plan to use your radio for a family road trip or a local emergency, chances are, you'll be using an HT (handheld transceiver) at one time or another. On one hand, these little units can pack a real punch when you need them; on the other hand, their miniature and portable nature often causes us to forget how limited they can be without extra added gear they might need.

Gear list

Let's list some of the accessories that can help your HT, or help you when operating your HT. Since this training is meant to complement a *handheld* radio, I'm going to assume that you've already got one, so these things are *in addition to* your HT. Also, these are only suggestions, so some of them might not be as applicable to you, as for another ham:

- A better antenna than the one that came with your HT, such as
 - ◊ A [Signal Stick](#)
 - ◊ A [whip antenna](#)
 - ◊ A [telescopic whip](#)
 - ◊ A [Slim Jim antenna](#)
 - ◊ A roll-up J-pole antenna
 - ◊ A [tactical blade antenna](#)
- An external microphone or [lapel mic](#)
- An earpiece or ear bud
- Additional power sources, such as
 - ◊ An [alkaline sled](#), which is an empty case for alkaline batteries
 - ◊ An extra [rechargeable battery](#), like Li-ion, NiMH, LiFePO4, and more
 - ◊ A charger, if you believe you'll be near an AC outlet, or a [battery eliminator](#), if you're in a vehicle

◊ A [portable solar panel and charge controller](#), with appropriate cabling and DC connectors

- A [programming cable](#) (and therefore, maybe even your laptop)
- A belt clip (for the radio)
- A lapel clip (for the microphone)
- A [chest harness](#) or gear organizer
- Spares for any of the above

Unrelated essentials

And here are a few things not related to ham radio, that might help while using your HT:

- A flashlight or desk light or headlamp
- Pen and paper, permanent marker
- A bottle of water
- An umbrella, for either rain or sun

Finally, do you need to rush out and purchase all of these things this very week? Of course not. *You* decide which accessories make the most sense for you to use, then gradually build up your equipment arsenal as you have the means to do so. Also, with experience, you'll find that your equipment wish list will mature, allowing you to pick the *right* gear for your circumstances, and maybe others that aren't listed here.

